

Global Assessment Survey Preliminary Report, 2020

The UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) is currently conducting Global Assessment of Environmental-Economic Accounting and Supporting Statistics to monitor implementation progress of the SEEA. The survey was sent to all countries on 25 September 2020. The UNCEEA will present the results of the assessment to the UN Statistical Commission in March 2021. The results will also enable the UNCEEA to assess the status of national implementation of environmental economic accounting programmes, review countries institutional arrangement in compiling environmental economic accounts and identify priorities and future plans.

The global assessment is also expected to support the monitoring Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators: a) 15.9.1 on the integration of ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts and b) SDG indicator 12.b.1 on the number of sustainable tourism strategies or policies and implemented action plans with agreed monitoring and evaluation tools.

Prior to the current administration, the survey was last administered in 2017, during which 69 countries indicated that they had compiled SEEA accounts. As of mid-November, 132 countries have submitted their response to the survey, and 80 countries have reported that they have compiled at least one account in the previous five years or are currently compiling their first SEEA account. In addition, 26 countries have reported that they are planning to compile the accounts in the future.

Of the 80 countries that have indicated that they are compiling SEEA accounts, almost all have indicated that they compiled (or are beginning compilation) of SEEA-CF accounts. In addition, 21 countries have indicated compiling ecosystem accounts. In terms of the new definition of SEEA implementation the breakdown of the three stages of SEEA implementation is as follows:

- 12 countries are at stage I (compiled at least one account in the past five years).
- 10 countries are stage II (compiled and published at least one account in the past five years) and
- 58 countries are under stage III (regularly compile and published the accounts in the past five years)

The survey is still open, and these numbers are expected to increase when more responses are received from countries in the coming days. At the same time, it is difficult to ensure that all countries respond, even those that have compiled SEEA accounts. This can be due to a number of reasons, though the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly caused difficulties in communication. There are several countries where either the NSO or a government agency has compiled and/or published the accounts, but no institution has responded to the Global Assessment. Thus, the number of countries implementing the accounts is undercounted by the Global Assessment.

Given this, the Committee is asked to consider the following proposal:

- If a national statistical office or other government institution has published an account which is easily accessible online, but has not responded to the Global Assessment or responded that they do not compile the relevant account, UNSD may impute this country as compiling the SEEA. Since

UNSD cannot make any assumption whether a country regularly compiles and publishes the account, this country would fall under Stage II.

- Similarly, if UNSD knows that a country compiles SEEA accounts through a project and verifies this with the international organizations involved, UNSD may input this country as compiling the SEEA under Stage I or II as appropriate.

If the Committee agrees, UNSD will update the metadata of 15.9.1 according to new definition of implementation as well as the agreed imputation approach for consideration by the IAEG-SDG.